

# The Charlotte Post

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75 CENTS

## The case for black representation

Shaw vs. Hunt decision is latest setback, Watt says

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

To Mel Watt, recent Supreme Court rulings, including last week's rejection of the 12th congressional district, and the rash of church burnings are *deja vu* all over again. It was about 100 years ago that another conservative Supreme Court in its *Plessy v.*

Ferguson ruling, established the "separate but equal" doctrine which relegated blacks to subpar facilities and stifled the race's development for generations.

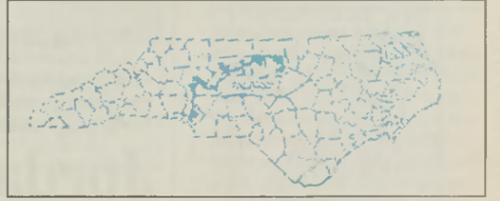
One difference between the high court then and now is the presence of an African American among the majority in the recent votes, which has struck down majority-black congressional districts and otherwise challenged the notion

that racism is still pervasive enough to require extraordinary remedies.

Rep. Mel Watt, the 12th District representative, cited the analogy in referring to the court's 5-4 decision, with African American Justice Clarence Thomas in the majority.

"Working against us are five people on the Supreme Court who don't recognize the practical aspects of real life," Watt said.

Church burnings - 38 African American sanc-  
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The 12th congressional district as mapped now is illegal after last week's Supreme Court ruling.

## Festival moves uptown

NAACP national convention attracts West Charlotte Fest

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

West Charlotte Fest will return to downtown and coincide with the opening of the NAACP's 87th national convention next month.

The African American-oriented festival, begun as WestFest in 1986, will be July 6-7 on Tryon Street between Fifth and Second streets in uptown Charlotte. After a string of economic setbacks and organizational uncertainty, the festival was revived and re-organized by the West Charlotte Merchants

• West Charlotte Fest will be held at Fifth and Second streets.

Association and renamed West Charlotte Fest four years ago.

The NAACP convention will be held at the Charlotte Convention Center, one block off Tryon

between Second and Stonewall streets July 6-10.

The convention, expected to attract 5,000 delegates and more than 15,000 visitors, could be the largest ever for the nation's largest and oldest civil rights organization.

President Bill Clinton and Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole are scheduled to address the convention. The NAACP's ACT-SO young talent competition will also be held during the event.

Delegates, guests and visitors are expected to fill uptown hotels and others in the Charlotte area.

West Charlotte Fest, which was held at Marshall Park in 199, traditionally has been held at West Charlotte High School. Festival organizer Louise Sellers says attendance has grown to over 160,000 patrons over a two-day period.

The festival features food vendors, live entertainment from local and national recording rosters, T-shirt and other clothing sales, plus much more ethnic-flavored sales and activities.

## Keepers of the flame



Robert Little, Kater Cornwell and Allison Preston (left to right) are part of the Olympic Torch Relay that comes through Charlotte Monday.

## Torchbearers symbolize community

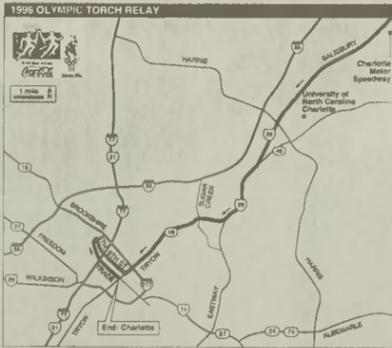
By Tammie Tolbert  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

The universal flame of the 1996 Olympic Torch Relay is coming to Charlotte on Monday.

The citywide celebration begins at 7:30 p.m. on the Square at Trade and Tryon streets. Activities include live music, demonstrative Olympic sports and street Olympics as well as guest appearances by the Carolina Panthers cheerleaders and Sir Purr, the team's mascot.

The Charlotte event marks the 59th day of the flame's 84-

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## Church fires top pastors' conference

NAACP, law enforcement call for community involvement

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

As the wave of African American church burnings continued this week, local and national efforts to stop them increased, including such disparate groups as the right wing Christian Coalition and the Jewish Anti-Defamation League.

In Charlotte, efforts included a sparsely attended meeting called by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP chapter and the police department.

The meeting at the predominantly white First Baptist Church uptown attracted about a half dozen local pastors, who were out-numbered by the police and fire officials and NAACP officials.

The purpose of the gathering was billed as a discussion of how to prevent church burnings and vandalism. It featured presentations by crime prevention



PHOTO/PAUL WILLIAMS III

Claud Alexander, pastor of University Park Baptist Church and Bob Davis listen during a meeting of Charlotte clergy Tuesday.

officers encouraging activism to watch church buildings more closely and to install burglary and fire alarms.

In attendance were an interra-  
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## First Ward moves toward mixed-income housing arrangement

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Plans for First Ward's Earle Village public housing project crystallized a bit this week when the Charlotte Housing Authority and NationsBank's community development arm agreed on a 400-unit mixed-income housing development putting low income residents next to young professionals.

The plan would still include the 68 elderly units under construction and 132 units for low income residents, but 200 units will be added - half rented below market value and the other half rented to those earning 60 percent or less of the

median household income in Charlotte's. That ranges from \$17,000 to \$21,000.

Admission to the complex would be carefully controlled. Prospective tenants would face credit and criminal records checks, even pre-rental visits to current residences. Low income residents would have to qualify for the housing authority's self-sufficiency program.

The plan's 400 units is twice original goals for use of a \$42

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Unsel "Bingo" Smith received his degree from North Carolina Central University Sunday as 60 well-wishers looked on.

## College degree awaits paralyzed student

By Winfred B. Cross  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Few graduations have had as much family participation as Unsel "Bingo" Smith's.

Bingo, who was paralyzed from the neck down in an automobile accident Oct. 4, was tearfully awarded a degree Sunday in criminal justice from N.C. Central University by his mother Carolyn and father L.C. The ceremony was in his front yard before 60 friends, neighbors and

family members. His grandmother, Ruth Beatty, gave the invocation.

"I felt elated, overwhelmed with joy," Carolyn, a 1979 Central graduate, said. "It was one of the most important things I could have done for my son."

Carolyn got the news two days beforehand that Bingo would get his degree. She wept.

"I had prayed a lot about it," she said. "I got with a co-worker and we went in the closet and

cried. I was thrilled to death."

It was a surprise to Bingo, who was eight weeks away from earning the degree last December. He wept when he received the degree, but thanked all his friends and family and joked afterwards "now I need a job." He was barely audible. His breathing is assisted by a ventilator.

Bingo actually earned the degree May 11, but George P. Wilson, chairman of Central's  
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